Improvisation as a Mean of Student's Empowerment and Discharge in Physical Education

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Abstract: The intensity and fatigue of the children attending the final class of the Lyceum is evident since the beginning of the school year. Having the desire to unload and empower students who are completing their secondary education, we have created games together where the expression of emotions and fun meets the challenge and "reconstruction" of the environment as they form it.

More specifically, during the Physical Education lesson with the fourteen children of the C1 class of General Lyceum of Ermioni, we created a code where during the lessons we represented emotions, and stories in different space-time.

After expressing emotions through different walks of everyone in the group, we proceeded to an instantaneous immobilization where each child tells his/her personal story, thought or the situation that led him/her to this emotion.

Therefore, after identifying with the children the time and detecting the social, historical and economic environment (institutions, customs) but also the space, as framed by climatic, geophysical, architectural parameters, and we did not fail to predetermine the way, we ended up setting the "scene". In fact, we separated with the children the dramatic time (direct representation of a dramatic event) and the real time.

The above dramatizations had as their axis moments of the lesson, for example, dramatization of sports, moments of triumph or failure. They can refer to athletes from the Paralympic Games but also great moments in the history of sports, or they represent moments from everyday school life as experienced through the eyes of a teenager.

This process had multiple benefits in both directions, the children eliminate the tension, challenge and co-shape a different context by playing and I experience the world through their own perspective.

Key words: improvisation, physical Education, discharge, empowerment

1. Introduction

Initially given the need for a vision to exist for education and the role that teachers play in it, a vision that will be linked to the vision of the society in which we want to live and where we want our children to live, a vision, beyond the day-to-day concerns that will provide an orientation as to what we are doing and why we are doing it and which will then determine how we do it and how we will do it in the future, we proceeded to the action described below.

The real school must correspond to the social reality, that is, be attractive to students and teachers. Its goal is

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the complete general education of students but also the cultivation of their personality. The school must develop critical thinking and social reflection, student participation and solidarity. To respect diversity, to connect people with society and the environment, with the general goal of creating an integrated citizen who will be able to participate in the "social becoming". In this school, knowledge will be acquired through reflection and understanding, the active participation of students with the method of research, the constant communication of students and teachers, the participation of the school in the community and the participation of society in the school.

2. Overview of the Literature

We must never forget the fact that the goals of education change over time, so there are changes in both goals and methods. Given that these processes are time consuming and the transition is not automatic, teachers follow many teaching methods from different theoretical starting points that dynamically adapt. In fact, all this is happening in a society that is constantly changing and redefining goals and needs, laying the foundations for the next changes in perpetual cyclical processes. The above demonstrates that learning is ultimately an extremely sensitive process, dependent on many factors. It is extremely important to always keep in mind that there is no single theory of learning, technique or approach that can be applied to every situation, and this is something that is required by the diversity of human nature. Summarizing the above, it should be noted that three basic assumptions of the open approach to learning can be formulated: a) learning takes place dynamically and randomly, at any time and in any place, b) the goals that are set can and must be change and adapt in part or in whole depending on the evolution of the learning process, and c) the results of the learning process are not predetermined. By this logic, every theoretical system must utilize all situations and turn them into opportunities for learning. It also needs to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of an individual or a group. Finally, it must not remain dogmatic in the goals it sets and in the results it expects.

In Greece, there is a recent trend of promoting innovation in teaching through a variety of new teaching and learning methods, such as active, group, exploratory, student-centered learning and teaching with the use of ICT. In addition, today the Greek education system, and schools in particular, are shifting towards an open attitude in the local community, which encourages cooperation. Significant changes have taken place in schools and new avenues have been opened in terms of teaching methods, tools, and practices.

2.1 Necessity of the Research Study

The term dramatic art has its root in the verb act, which means action, that is, I do an action. In the Greek language the word drama is used with multiple meanings. In addition to action, it can denote tragic, dramatic work, tragedy, and dramatization. It is important to note that originally the term widely used was not dramatic art in education, but "educational drama", which is just an art form that serves education (Dramain Education), to distinguish it from any other theatrical educational genre (Woolland, 1999, p. 24).

Drama can be taught either as an independent art course, used as a tool for teaching other courses in the curriculum of all grades (Avdi & Hatzigeorgiou, 2007). The term Dramain Education, developed in Great Britan in its current form, around the 1980s. The aim was to reflect on everyday issues, the study of theatrical plays and important people in the art of theater. The main concern was to bridge the gap created by teaching and learning isolated from the needs of students, the commitment to memorization and the sterile obsession with the accumulation of scientific knowledge. According to one approach, the teacher used the educational drama as a tool to prepare a theatrical performance with the aim of describing modules from the field of science, technology, based

on the curriculum, or interdisciplinary teaching. It then asked questions that helped to assess the learning achieved through the drama.

In Greece, the dramatic process in education is different from that in Great Britan. The role of theater in schools is only to "upload" performances at the end of the school year or on national and religious holidays. In recent years, "drama" and "dramatization" have become widely used as pedagogical tools. Drama is a way of behaving in life. It deals with issues of common interests within cultures and offers the individual the opportunity to know himself/herself and to define himself/herself through culture. At the same time, drama has the potential to appeal to all those teachers, who seek inspiration, creation and method, to give meaning to their teaching and content to their children's learning (Woolland, 1999). Drama is defined as "a structured pedagogical process that adopts the theatrical form — that is, the techniques and tools of dramatic art - for the personal and social development of the participants, as well as the better assimilation of knowledge within its social context" (Kallianta & Karavoltsou, 2006, p. 1).

Dramatic art in education is a social form of art and a way of exploring the world through dramatic activities, roles and dramatized situations. A dominant feature of dramatic art is the emphasis placed on the development of social or emotional skills of the individual or the child as well as on human interaction. It also functions as a mean of exploring and realizing concerns as well as recognizing oneself and others. This can lead the revision of certain attitudes and behaviors. "Drama is a selective expression of human interaction in which codes and behaviors can be considered, since the place of the drama allows for revision, something that can not be done in life itself" (Alkistis, 2008, p. 218). The above definition implies the development of a critical attitude towards life and the formation of a new solution to the experiences of the group or the individual.

Another characteristic of dramatic art in education is teamwork and the ability to transform. According to Bolton, Gavin and Heathcote (1999, pp. 6–13) "Dramatic Art in Education is to deliberately create a microcosm of behaviors, in which participants act as a team, knowing that they create it themselves and that it is fantastic. It is a social process and concerns the behavior of people in situations that affect them in one way or another, comically or tragically. However, they know that this is a contract, it is not a reality, it is not true, but it is plausible".

Another characteristic is that through the dramatic art and specifically through games of acquaintance and trust, through storytelling, role plays, improvisations and representations, children learn to work in a spirit of cooperation and teamwork, to respect each other's needs and to take on responsibilities, which means that they are prepared in some way to positively influence the adult world.

In addition, educational drama is a powerful learning and teaching tool for all children, regardless of age and ability, "which is first identified in the child's social-dramatic play, while later it is a developmentally appropriate practice for the social and educational development of the individual". "Educational drama is a way of learning through the active identification of students with roles and situations, as they imagine and shape them in dramatic practice, through which they can learn to explore events and relationships. Children, based on prior knowledge, retrieve their knowledge and experiences from the real world in order to create a believable imaginary, constructed reality. In this way, and since with the guidance of the teacher they deepen in what they have created, they understand themselves and the world of reality that surrounds them" (O'Neil, 1995, p. 47).

It is also worth noting how important the role of the teacher-animator is in the whole process of realizing the dramatic art in education. The educator-animator having the role of coordinator of the whole process, through reflection is the one who can lead the children to individual-group development and growth, to unloading and empowerment.

Students have the opportunity through educational drama to acquire social skills, life skills such as empathy, critical thinking and exploratory unconventional gaze. "Empathy, the ability to understand how others feel and put themselves in their place, as well as the ability to empathize with them honestly-participatory rather than passively-observant", are characteristics of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner's multiple intelligence theory). Empathy is the expectation not only of education, but also of the society that wants to transform and proceed to internal changes, which will rightly give it a more "social" character. Perhaps being that way, able to put one's imagination in the place of the other is a key feature of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion and the beginning of morality.

The national exams for the entry to the universities are a difficult and stressful test for children, charged with dreams and desires of both children and parents. Given that there are many definitions of stress and that according to one of them "Anxiety is the feeling of anxiety that a person has" and there is the characteristic (trait anxiety) and occasional (state) anxiety. Characteristic anxiety is defined as the general tendency for a person to be anxious constantly while occasional anxiety occurs when one feels anxious temporarily (e.g., an athlete before the shot/race). Research shows that better performance is associated with moderate stress levels, while in cases of very high and very low stress we also have low performance.

Perhaps a first way of approaching children, a first key step is to explain to them that what we want is their happiness, which is not measured by grades and in which university department they are attending to. It is important for children to know that we love them unconditionally, accept them and are proud of them, as well as of their effort regardless of the outcome. At the second level, what we need to do is to help them deal with stress but also to help them become stronger during the process of preparation and study. The intervention described below is perhaps the next step in relieving and empowering children.

3. Methodology

3.1 Objectives

Through the effort to relieve children from stress and to achieve the empowerment of children, a pedagogical practice is sought, which liberates the potential of children, which creates ground and motivation for the development of their creativity, through experimentation and active participation of children in acquisition of personal experiences, in a conquest and experience of knowledge and exploration of the inner world in relation to the outside in an enjoyable way without violating their personal time.

3.2 Methodological Approach

The intensity and fatigue of the children attending the final class of Lyceum is evident from the beginning of the school year. With the desire to unload and empower students who are completing their secondary education, we have created games together where the expression of emotions and fun meets the challenge and "reconstruction" of the surrounding space.

During the course of Physical Education (which is three hours in the weekly schedule) with the fourteen children of C1 class of Genal Lyceum of Ermioni we created a code where during the lessons we represent emotions, and stories in different space-time. The impulse arose from a variety of stimuli that could be coded in the following:
- Visual (words, posters, images, objects, photos) and/or
- audio (music, sounds)

The members of the group enter into situations that they create with their imagination and compose a story

based on the stimuli. Initially, the dominant point was the assumption of roles (the role can be group or personal), e.g., I am getting ready to leave for studies, I take time to say goodbye to what is of value to me back to my hometown.

Then follows the stage of preparation, as each group or subgroup is isolated in order to be given by the students themselves / -three directing instructions, to create rough sets or costumes, to search or create an original background music, but also to find the right way of presentation.

The stage of composition follows, it can vary in means and be a pantomime, or the development of ingenuity and expressiveness.

At the stage of expression which is also dominant, it should be pointed out that a clear ending point should be given. As for the evaluation of the process that follows after various relaxation, coordination, and/or sensory exercises , the techniques we followed were many. It is also very important to clearly define the beginning and end of the person's action.

In order to proceed with the dramatization, we clearly identified:

- Person (personality, temperament, tendencies, desires, occupation, particular characteristics, age, gender, perhaps facial experiences or short biography, perhaps to identify the person in a cross section over time, how he/she feels and reacts, how he/she behaves under the specific conditions). Sometimes, depending on the case, we only illuminated one side of the face.
- Time (the time is determined, when an event takes place, in this way we proceed to detect the social, economic, political, etc. environment).
  - o Duration of the event
  - o Action time
    - ▪ Stage time (direct representation of a dramatic event)
    - ▪ Dramatic time (determined by the text)
    - ▪ Real time (the time that for the viewer covers the events that are not determined by the stage space).
- Space (we defined space from the general to the specific and space is framed by geographical, climatic, urban, climatic, soil and vegetation, as well as the animals of an area-if they exist in the dramatization).
- In what way (under what conditions, through which network of relationships, which movement we emphasize, how we position ourselves, which movement we emphasize and declare our position towards the issue).

In the course of Physical Education, after we chose different walks, e.g.,

- Person: I am Matina D. a student of the final class of Lyceum, 17 years old, the youngest of the three children of my family, I want to study and live in Athens. I have chosen to study human studies. I speak fluently and I am a very sensitive and caring person.
- Time: present time, 2019, autumn, Sunday night. Petty bourgeois society with a few conflicts. There will be elections in a year.
- Place: Ermioni, mild climate, landscape of an island. I walk on an uphill road, paved, illuminated. It drizzles.
- Way: I'm disappointed, I did not do well in the last test. I feel loneliness and frustration and frost inside me. I express it by walking as if I am in a vacuum or by crying.

We proceed to an instantaneous immobilization where the child tells his/her personal story, thought or situation

that led him/her to this feeling.

The above dramatizations have as their axis moments of the lesson, for example, I dramatize sports, individually or in groups, moments of triumph or failure. In some cases they referred to athletes of the Paralympic Games and also great moments in the history of sports, or we proceeded to representing moments from everyday school life as experienced through the eyes of a teenager.

Improvisation is not limited only by coordinates of space, time, environmental conditions but also was influenced by various elements carried by the subject and is a function of his personal experiences. The movement in improvisation is on a personal level but is demonstrated by the other members and shaped through a constant conciliation with them. Presents and shapes the improvisations of other members.

The lack of restrictions gives the participating students the opportunity to externalize the inner wealth and find new ways of expression, unloading, movement both in the imaginary field and in reality. This freedom enables the transition and a unique sense of the magical, the metaphysical, the impossible.

Improvisation can move to levels of improvisation of music, rhythm, speech, composition, dramatization.

It should also be emphasized that either individual exercises were used (group members moved individually and expressed freely), or everyone participated (all actors), or all spectators participated except the actor. In some cases the following activities were selected:

- Walking
- salutation
- pulling a rope
- Sequences
- Sports — Sports games

Exercises in pairs were selected sequentially to implement activities such as the following:

- Mirror
- Dionyms (lost-won)
- Telephone communication
- Random encounters
- Departures-Arrivals-Receptions-Recognition

In some cases we also chose group exercises with three people, exercises with four people (four athletes compete), but also group exercises (five basketball players buy umbrellas) (exam topics). These group exercises had a theme that fell into the following examples:

- In the means of transport (student excursion by boat).
- At the entertainment venues (a teen party)
- Travel (balloon)
- Travel through time (Ancient Olympic Games)
- Trip to a museum (Iniohos of the archaeological museum of Delphi)
- Travel through ages (what will my life be like in 40 years)
- Travel to imaginary places (eg another planet, space where objects come to life)
- Travel within our body
- Journey to dreams
- Recording of situations, trends
- Emotions

- Situations
- Experiences
- Demonstrations (we organize an environmental protection group)
- Facts
- Imaginary world

In some cases we dealt with the cognitive subjects of the school curriculum and other times the children were asked to record topics by themselves. In fact, in some cases we used improvisation techniques such as the following:

- Snapshots (image freeze)
- Words
- Working with our emotions (love, fear, hate, suspicion, embarrassment, irritability, anxiety, boredom, passion, loneliness, joy, pleasure).
- Work with images (Boal' s, "picture theatre") — images of the ideal.

When we finished the dramatization we proceeded to the clear demarcation of its end and this happened beyond the demarcation and with the return from another reality that we lived in a world of an objective reality that we live now. It is this process that helps us crystallize what each member of the group lived through the dramatization.

Finally, the evaluation was achieved mainly through discussion, but there were cases where we applied techniques such as the diary, a group letter, a creation (play, puppet show, shadow theater, a painting, a newspaper, etc.)

4. Results

The above process has multiple benefits both ways, children eliminate tension, challenge and co-form a different context by playing. At the same time, for the teacher, the role of the animator, leads to the world experiencing the children through their own perspective. The students were mobilized to find solutions, they wanted to create an "image" that expresses the ideal interaction. The children seemed to be fighting passivity. They are empowered, they show vigilance, a process that leads them to the exclusion and rejection of repetitive duplications. The child mutates his/her relationship with others and with himself.

It enriches its mobility and expressiveness and in fact with possibilities of enjoyment, excitement and joy. Maybe this is because "the world does not change easily. Sometimes some solutions to our problems seem "magical". "Even the fact that we are looking for the 'ideal' and that we are moving towards it, is very important".

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